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CLICK HERE for Multiple Property Listing, "Black
Metropolis Thematic Resources"

PROPERTY NAME WABASH AVENUE YMCA
LOCATION 3763 S. Wabash Avenue CITY/TOWN/VICINITY Chicago
COUNTY Cook STATE Illinois ZIP 60653
OWNER'S NAME St. Thomas Episcopal Church
LOCATION 3801 S. Wabash Avenue CITY/TOWN/VICINITY Chicago
STATE Illinois ZIP 60653
LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION Cook County Recorder of Deeds
118 N. Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION LOTS 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 IN HARRIET FARLIN'S SUB. OF LOTS
13, 14, AND 15 IN BROWN'S SUB. OF N½ of SW¼ of SW¼
SEC. 34-39-14 (SEE ATTACHED)
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE Less than one acre

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1911-13 ARCHITECT AND/OR BUILDER Robert C. Berlin, architect

DESCRIPTION Five-story and basement concrete frame structure faced with brown pressed
brick and buff Bedford limestone trim. Interior arranged with auditorium,
meeting rooms, class rooms, pool and residential quarters.

DATE AND NATURE OF ALTERATIONS Five storey addition added to the north in 1925
(recessed back from street elevation).

OUTBUILDINGS AND/OR OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES ON PROPERTY (ATTACH SKETCH
PLAN IF APPLICABLE) N/A

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WABASH AVENUE Y.M.C.A.
3763 South Wabash Avenue

Date of construction: 1911-13

Architect: Robert C. Berlin

The Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. was opened to the public on June 15, 1913, successfully culminating a three-year fund raising drive to facilitate its erection. The project was initiated through the efforts of Sears, Roebuck & Company chairman Julius Rosenwald, a Chicago businessman whose philanthropic support of black-oriented projects and causes resulted in the construction of Y.M.C.A. buildings and the support of a wide variety of social programs across the country. On January 13, 1911, Rosenwald publicly offered to advance \$25,000 towards the erection of a combined community center, gymnasium, pool, and residential quarters to be run under the auspices of the Young Mens Christian Association in the Douglas community. Rosenwald's offer was soon matched by contributions from many of the city's most prominent businesses and citizens, including N.W. Harris, Cyrus McCormick, Mrs. G.F. Swift, and the Pullman Company. Public contributions also were instrumental in funding its erection, with over \$20,000 being raised within Black Metropolis alone.

The completed Y.M.C.A. was an imposing five-story structure fronted in dark pressed brick with Bedford limestone trim designed by Chicago architect Robert C. Berlin, who had previously served as architect for other Y.M.C.A. projects. The building was of concrete frame construction, and was one of the best equipped structures of its type at the time of its opening.

The timing of the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A.'s opening was auspicious, for it soon became one of the major centers for the assistance of incoming arrivals from the South during the Great Migration. The staff established comprehensive programs for finding housing and employment for the thousands of southern blacks who arrived in Chicago between 1910 and 1920 seeking greater opportunities in Chicago. People arriving with no friends or contacts to guide them in the city found a warm welcome at the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. where the residence rooms were often filled to capacity by newly arrived Chicagoans who stayed until permanent accommodations could be obtained.

The Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. also conducted extensive job training programs, which benefited not only the new arrivals but the established neighborhood residents as well. One of the most popular programs was the auto repair class, where the mechanics of automobile repair were explained in detail, using actual late model cars for demonstration purposes.

Aside from its role in assisting new arrivals to the city, the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. was an important part of community life in Black Metropolis. The large assembly hall was used for a wide variety of civic meetings and functions of the community, and the gymnasium and pool offered a pleasant diversion for young and old alike. Programmed educa-

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tional and social programs became a staple of neighborhood activities, making the Wabash Y.M.C.A. one of the most heavily utilized public organizations of Chicago's black community.

The Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. continued to be an important part of the Douglas community until the late 1970s, when the national office of the Y.M.C.A. decided to close it. The building has been recently targeted for rehabilitation and re-opening under the auspices of a local church which currently holds title to the property.

VIRGINIA, Rockbridge County, Mechanicsville vicinity, Locust Hill, VA 608 (05/12/86)

WASHINGTON, Clark County, Vancouver, Anderson—Beletski Prune Farm, 4119 NW McCann Rd. (05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Cowlitz County, Castle Rock vicinity, Laughlin Round Barn, 8249 Barnes Dr. (05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Lewis County, Chehalis, Palmer, O. K., House, 673 NW Pennsylvania (05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Snohomish County, Everett, Weyerhaeuser Office Building, 1710 W. Marine View Dr. (05/14/86)

WASHINGTON, Whitman County, Oakesdale vicinity, Hanford, Edwin H., House, N of WA 271 (05/15/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Barbour County, Philippi, Philippi B & O Railroad Station, 146 N. Main St. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Beallmore (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1500 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Brooke Cemetery (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 2200 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Duval, General I.H., Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1222 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Elmhurst (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1606 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Hall, Lewis, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1300 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Paul, Harry and Louisiana Beall, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1312 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Tarr, Lucy, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1456 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Fleming, David and Lucy Tarr, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 2000 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WYOMING, Carbon County, Saratoga vicinity, Jack Creek Guard Station, Off FDR No. 452 (05/15/86)

The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were excluded from a previous notice:

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Chicago Bee Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3647—3655 S. State St. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Eighth Regiment Armory (Black Metropolis TR), 3533 S. Giles Ave. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Jordon Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3529—3549 S. State St. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Overton Hygienic Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3619—3627 S. State St. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Unity Hall (Black Metropolis TR), 3140 S. Indiana Ave. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Victory Sculpture (Black Metropolis TR), Thirty-fifth St. at King Dr. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Wabash Avenue YMCA (Black Metropolis TR), 3763 S. Wabash Ave. (04/30/86)